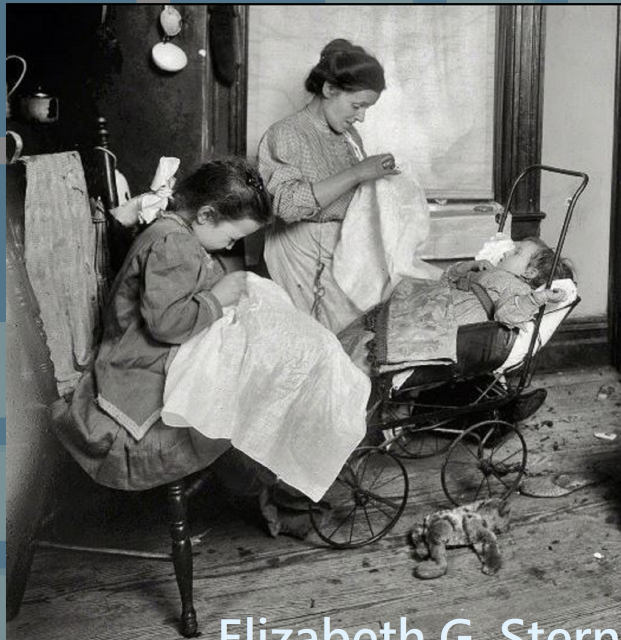


My Mother and I

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Elizabeth G. Stern

My Mother and I by Elizabeth Gertrude Stern (1889-1954)

Elizabeth Stern was two and a half years old, when her family emigrated from Poland to Pittsburgh. *My Mother and I* is the story of Stern's Americanization and how it ultimately alienated her from her parents. Stern's father had been a small village rabbi. Strict and traditional in his views, he sends Elizabeth to learn Hebrew at age four, so she can fulfill her destiny "*as the wife of a rabbi or scholar,*" but he opposes letting her attend high school. Stern's mother tries fitfully to pry open doors for her daughter. When Stern's father finds Elizabeth reading a secular book, and, in a fit of rage, flings the offending novel onto the top of a tall bookcase, her mother climbs on a chair and retrieves it for her. But Stern's mother never learns English even as it becomes her daughter's primary language; and, she is burdened by endless pregnancies (she ultimately bears 11 children, only the first 4 of whom survive). Stern's relationship with her mother is loving, but when Elizabeth goes to college, they draw apart. Her mother becomes a "*shadowy figure,*" standing with "*questioning, puzzled eyes,*" eyes in which there is love, "*but no understanding, and always an infinite loneliness.*"

Read for LibriVox by Sue Anderson

Meta Coordinator: TriciaG; Proof Listener: sidneyg
Total Running Time: 3:31:37

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